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Librarian Presentations   Library

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Academic Librarians' Opinions on Social Justice Advocacy

Judith L. Brink Drescher

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Judy Brink Drescher

Molloy University

Presented on October 11, 2023, to the

Professional Development Alliance

of Library Consortia

Problem Statement
(why I did it)

Systemic issues of a dominant narrative pervades libraries and academia

At 80%, the field of librarianship is overwhelmingly white, comprised of middle-aged, middle-class females[1]

There is a gender and race imbalance within salary and leadership opportunities[2]

There is difficulty attracting and retaining librarians and staff from culturally marginalized groups[3]

Lack of diversity can impede our ability to support an increasingly diverse student and workforce population[4]

[1]American Library Association (2017). *Member demographics study.* Schoenfeld, R. C., & Sweeney, L. (2017*). Inclusion, diversity, and equity: Members of the Association of Research Libraries: Employee demographics and user perspectives*

[2]American Library Association (2007). Library directors: Gender and salary.

[3]Alabi, J. (2015a). Racial microaggressions in academic libraries: Results of a survey of minority and non-minority librarians. The Journal of Academic Librarianship, 41(1), 47–53. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2014.10.008

[4]National Center for Education Statistics. (2021*). Condition of education: Undergraduate enrollment*.

Purpose of the Study

What leads some academic librarians to reflect upon and interrogate their worldview, so they become actively engaged as advocates and social justice allies (SJAs)?

What informs or impedes increased levels of social justice interest and commitment within the profession?

*"Allies are people with a genuine desire to create justice. They are individuals from a privileged group who make intentional choices to support or work for the rights of those from the oppressed group."**

*Goodman, D. J. (2011). *Promoting diversity and social justice: Educating people from privileged groups*, Routledge. p. 157.

Background

- Study served as a partial fulfillment toward an Ed.D.
- A two-phase mixed methods approach of surveys and interviews
- Emphasis on understanding the WHY
- Awarded 2022-2023 Dissertation of the Year!*

*Brink Drescher, J. L., (2022). *Toward a transdisciplinary model of social justice in academic librarianship: Promoting critical awareness within advocates and privileged allies*. https://digitalcommons.molloy.edu/etd/133

Timeline

Total response n = 156
Final sample n = 113

Phase 1 Quantitative: Design & Test Qualitrics Survey

Phase 2 Qualitative: Recruitment & Interviews

Transcribe/Finalize Librarian Narratives and Review with Those Interviewed

Write Discussion Chapter

Compile/Edit All Chapters

| MAR | APRIL | MAY | JUNE | JULY | AUG | SEPT | OCT | NOV | DEC |

Launched Survey Across 5 Listservs

Open-ended Question Analysis and Development of Collective Themes

Write Results Chapter

Dissertation Defense

Dissertation Published

Population & Sampling

- **Academic Librarians were the target population**

- **Five Listservs**
  - ACRL Members, Instruction, and Framework Lists
  - ALA Members List
  - State University of New York Librarian Listserv (SUNY-LA)
- **Candidate Criteria for Interviews Informed via the Survey**
  - Volunteer to be interviewed
  - Interest and commitment determined by the Social Issues Questionnaire (SIQ)*
  - Answers to Open-ended Questions (OeQs) regarding advocacy
  - 24 volunteers for interview candidate pool
  - 9 approached, 6 agreed

*Miller, M. J., Sendrowitz, K., Connacher, C., Blanco, S. Muñiz de la Peña, C, Bernardi, S., & Morere, L. (2009). College students' social justice interest and commitment: A social-cognitive perspective. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 56*(4), 495–507.

A Mixed-Methods Approach

Quantitative (Survey)
- Librarian Profile Survey: 7 closed-ended questions
- Personal Demographics: 5 closed-ended questions
- Social Issues Questionnaire (SIQ): 5 part/52 questions
- Advocacy: 2 closed-ended, 5 Open-ended Questions (OeQs)

Qualitative (Interviews)
- Social Justice Ally (SJA) Narratives
- Overarching Themes

Integrative (Overlap)
- Mixed assessment between OeQs and those Interviewed
- Overlap analysis between SJAs and Librarian Advocates
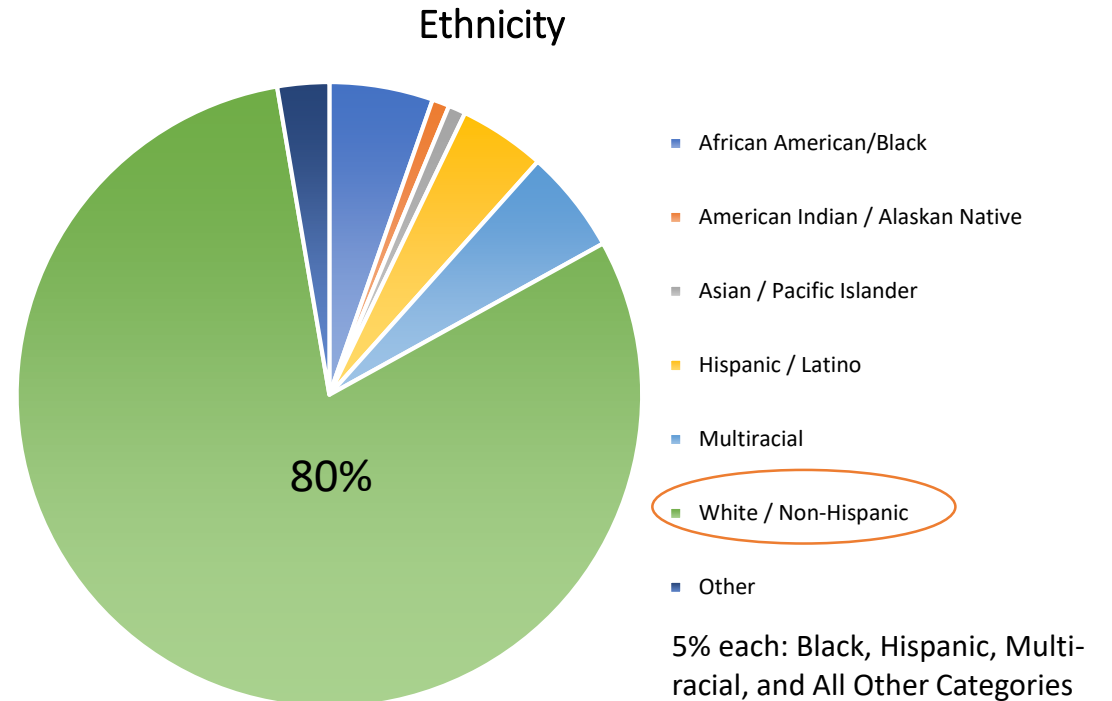- Informed overall Implications for Practice

Quantitative Results: Professional Demographics

Baseline Characteristic	n	%
Graduate Level of Education		
MLS or Equivalent	113	71
One or More Additional Master's Degrees	38	23
Doctorate	9	6
Provides Instruction		
Yes	95	85
No	18	15
Is Part of Administration		
Yes	22	19
No	91	81

Quantitative Results: Personal Demographics

Gender

4%

12%

83%

- Male
- Female
- Transgender
- Non-Binary / Third Gender
- Prefer Not to Say

Ethnicity

80%

- African American/Black
- American Indian / Alaskan Native
- Asian / Pacific Islander
- Hispanic / Latino
- Multiracial
- White / Non-Hispanic
- Other

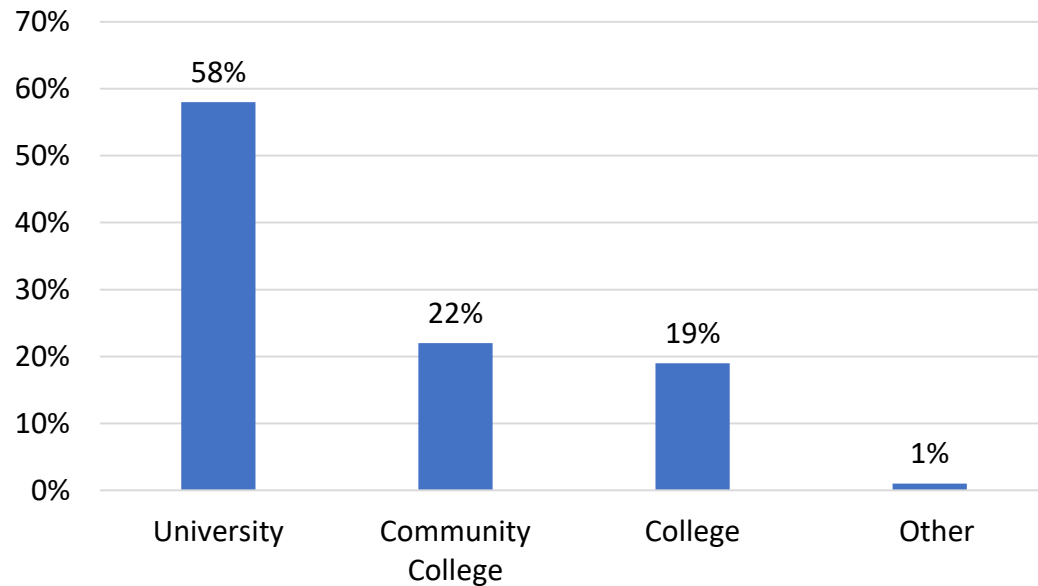5% each: Black, Hispanic, Multi-racial, and All Other Categories
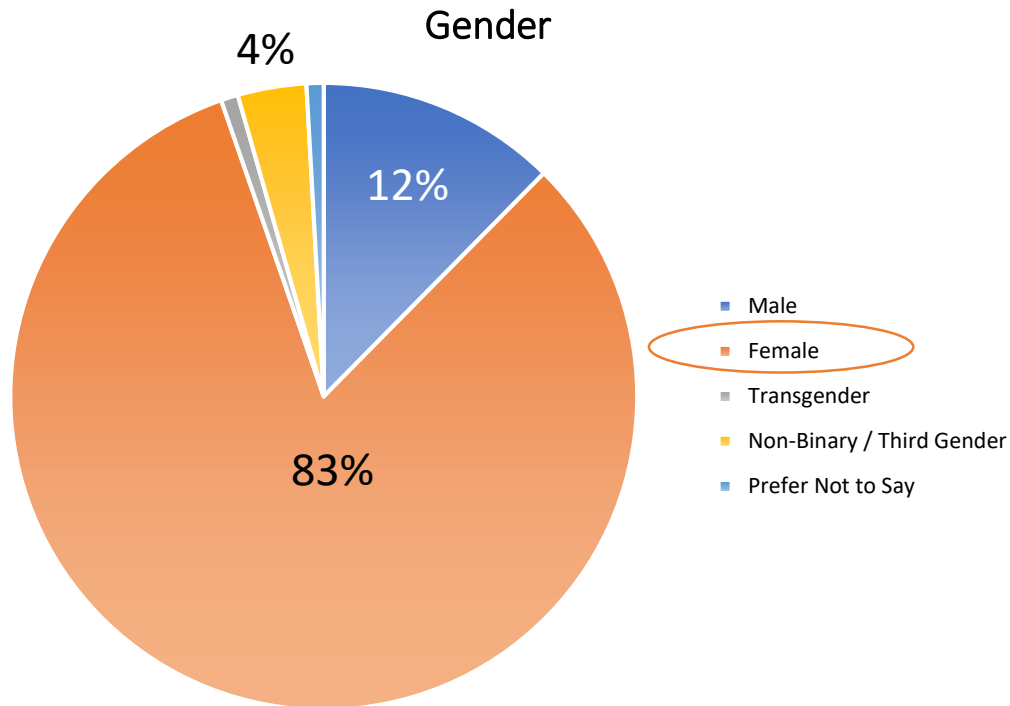
Personal Demographics Summary:

- Birth Country: 99% U.S.
- First Language: 92% English (U.S.)
- Gender: 83% Female; 12% Male; 4% Other

Baseline Characteristic	n	Minimum	Maximum	M	SD
Years in Profession	112	1	57	20.17	11.152
Age	108	24	72	42.97	11.126

Quantitative Results: Institutional Demographics

Institution Type

Institution Size (# of Students)
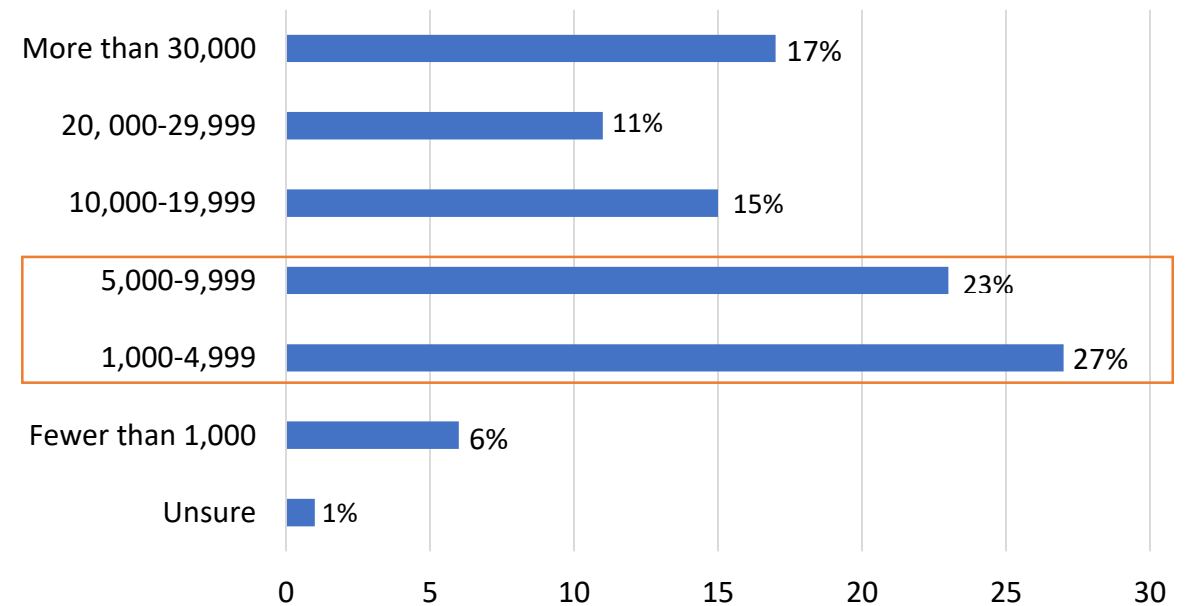
Quantitative Results: Advocacy

Social Justice Attitudes

Do you consider yourself to be a social justice advocate?

- Yes
- Unsure
- No
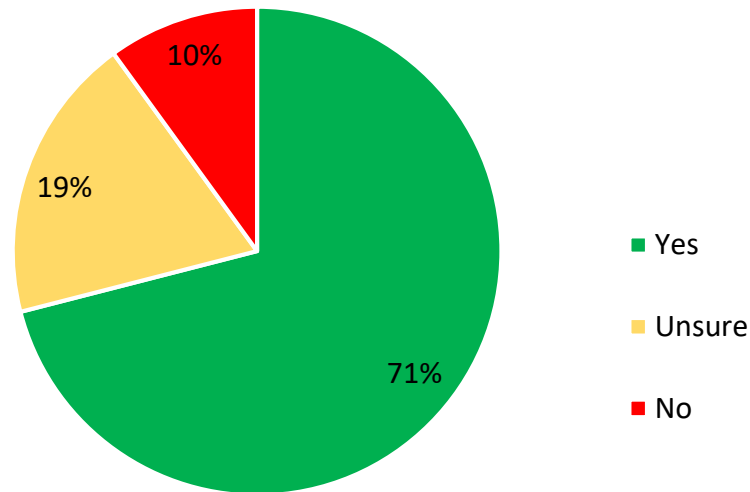
I believe I advocate for social justice...
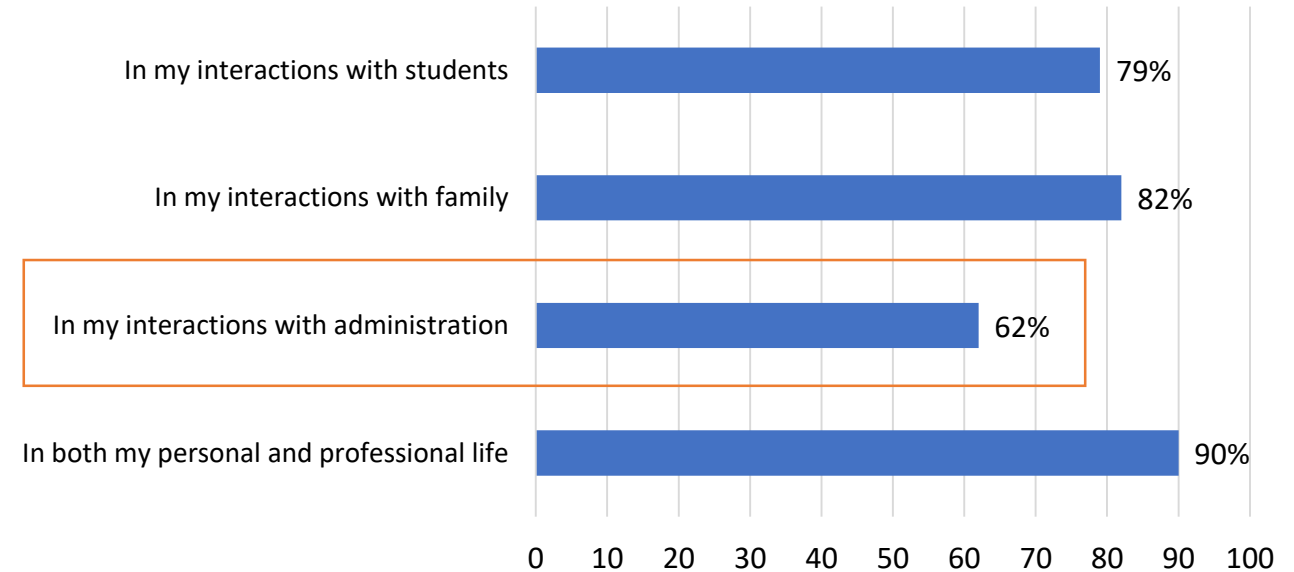
Quantitative Results: Statistical Analysis

*RQ1:Does social justice interest (SJI) correlate
with social justice commitment (SJC)?*

- There was a strong positive correlation between SJI and SJC
- Social justice interest also significantly predicted commitment
- As social justice interest increased, so did commitment

Quantitative Results: Statistical Analysis

RQ2: When considering the independent variables of type of institution, size of institution, years in the profession, highest earned degree, provides instruction, is part of library administration, age, ethnicity, and gender:

Is there a relationship between any of these characteristics and a) SJI or b) SJC?

Neither social justice interest (SJI) nor social justice commitment (SJC) were statistically significant with *any* of the nominal or scaled variables of librarian characteristics.

Open-ended Questions (OeQs)

Open-Ended Question	n		M	SD
	Comments	Word Count		
1) With any group or constituency, how do you approach issues of social justice?	69	2315	34	1307.082
2) What do you feel some of the benefits are in discussing matters of inequities in academic libraries?	68	2133	31	1202.943
3) What, if any, are some of the barriers you've encountered in advocating for social justice within academic libraries?	64	2227	35	1257.324
4) What advice might you offer to one of your peers who expressed interest in incorporating social justice into their professional practices?	60	2099	35	1184.505
5) Are there any additional comments you would like to add about advocating for social justice inside or outside of the library?	29	850	29	473.915

Advocacy Classification Scheme

1

SJAQ3 Approach	SJAQ4 Benefits	SJAQ5 Barriers
Within any group or constituency, how do you approach issues of social justice?	What do you feel some of the benefits are in discussing matters of inequity within academic libraries?	What, if any, are some of the barriers you've encountered in advocating for social justice within academic libraries?
I am a racial, gender, and disability justice advocate in my professional and personal life. Justice and my principles are deeply ingrained in my daily life in all aspects. **I don't see "issues of social justice" as unrelated to how I live in the world.**	**Access** and a **sense of belonging** are critical aspects of our work as librarians in academic spaces. Barriers to access of knowledge, information sources, and technology - whether physical or implicit/ socially constructed or internal (psychological, emotional, etc.) create inequities and it's our job to **dismantle those barriers** for our students and communities.	There is a dearth of Black librarians, indigenous librarians, and librarians who identify as Latinx or Hispanic particularly in academic libraries. Academic librarianship **perceived as prestigious and elite** is an inherently **classist attitude that is pervasive** even within presumptive attempts to "address inequities." A lot of academic librarianship discussions about these issues is performative and **perpetuates hierarchies** that are the opposite of the supposed inclusion they profess.
I am working to include more principles of **inclusive teaching** in my library instruction.	Academic libraries can help **mitigate some barriers** that students may face (i.e., access to technology), but they can only do so once these **inequities are acknowledged.**	
Because of where I live, I try to be **sneaky** when I talk about social justice issues or the type of volunteering I do. I always go for the most **palatable messaging**.	We can't start to do better outside of the academic library if we don't **address the problems within** first.	Faculty attitudes towards student accommodations. Many are very open about the fact that they think students are gaming the system, but admin does not stop this line of talk when it happens in meeting. They also **don't address the underlying issue** of faculty talking poorly about students with disabilities. There is this message of unwillingly going along because it is the law.
It depends on how it is brought up. I try to do so calmly in a way that will not upset who ever I am talking to.	Better **access** to those who may not have it. Potentially being able to change the way people look at things. Allowing other to provide **better service**.	
Book purchasing; book displays		
At work it works best to relate it to the **needs of our students**.	Increased success from students who feel heard and represented	People who like to talk about things but **never make the move toward action**
university. The university was founded by Catholic sisters who came here to address the medical, educational, and other **needs of the community.**	It is part of our **mission.**	None

2

approach	benefits	barriers	advice
provide resources	dismantling barriers	never address the underlying systemic issue	be persistent
speaking up	acknowledging inequities	pay lip service with no action	seek educational opportunities
being open	better access to resources	non tenured fear / other power restrictions	if you're going to do it, do some tha
listen	look in the mirror	lack of institutional support	be clear minded about the risk and
passive/fear based/only as it comes up	it must be addressed	lack of institutional support	find other like minded allies
informed	demographic disparaties btw staff and stud	union and job description restrictions	start now, start small, keep the mom
committees	improved environment SoC	resistence to change	take responsibility don't expect or re
it depends on where other person or group	examine inherent biases	advocacy/activism doesn't count toward ten	listen and don't be their voice
policies and procedures	examine climate and work spaces	emotional exhaustion / burn out/ same cast	make an ongoing lasting commitme
	better service	avoidance/being perceived as a troublemake	marginalized groups need to make i

3

Open-ended question 4 (SJAQ6)	Take Ownership	Seek Educational Opportunities	Be Historically Informed/Culturally Competent	Be Aware of the Risks	Find Like-Minded Allies	Make an Ongoing Commitment	Total Response Category Count
What advice might you offer to one of your peers who expressed interest in incorporating social justice into their professional practices?							
Subcategories	Be Persistent, Resilient, Humble, Patient & Persuasive, Interrogate biases, Build relationships, Leverage your privilege	PD, SJ specific training, committees, campus/comm unity events, volunteer work	Avoid the soapbox, White Savior complex, or assuaging guilt, Be specific/avoid jargon, Listen,	Make Time for Self-Care/Reserve Energy, Professional consequences, Disagreement, Discomfort, Isolation, Time consuming	Mentors, Leaders and influencers, support networks, safety in numbers,	Start now/Start small, be intentional, Do it for others and because it's right.Take action, look for low-hanging fruit, Don't give up, Apply multiple approaches	
Total responses per category	35	23	24	14	18	31	145
% of responses per category	24.1%	15.9%	16.6%	9.7%	12.4%	21.4%	100.0%
Look internally first: policies and procedures. Are you a welcoming place to all?	1					1	
Look to organizers in your local community and take cues from them. Find people you admire and notice when you disagree with them. **There is no straight line to justice and justice is never perfect. Try something and be willing to look back and try something different next time.**		1			1	1	
You will not solve the problem. It's not only up to you. You have a personal and professional responsibility and advocacy can look a lot of different ways. Maybe in programming (we have a melanin book club at our library), using instruction examples (for example, highlighting artists, authors, works, research questions with a social justice theme or amplify marginalized voices). **It doesn't necessarily have to be big, but should be consistent**	1					1	
Also be looking for opportunities to learn yourself and to revise existing systems or processes with a **more inclusive perspective.**	1	1	1				
do not if job is threaten or that you may be disappointed, but keep keep trying by means necessary	1			1			
I would applaud them and tell that they will find support within both the department and upper administration.	1					1	
Take it slowly and remember self-care. It's easy to burn out.				1		1	
Research, find people who are experts		1					

4

Categories	Volum	Percentag
Take Ownership	35	24%
Make an Ongoing Commitment	31	21%
Be Historically Informed/Culturally Competent	24	17%
Seek Educational Opportunities	23	16%
Find Like Minded Allies	18	12%
Be Aware of Risks & Consequences	14	10%
		100%

Graph Open-ended question 4 (SJAQ6)

What advice might you offer to one of your peers who expressed interest in incorporating social justice into their professional practices?

24% 21% 17% 16% 12% 10%

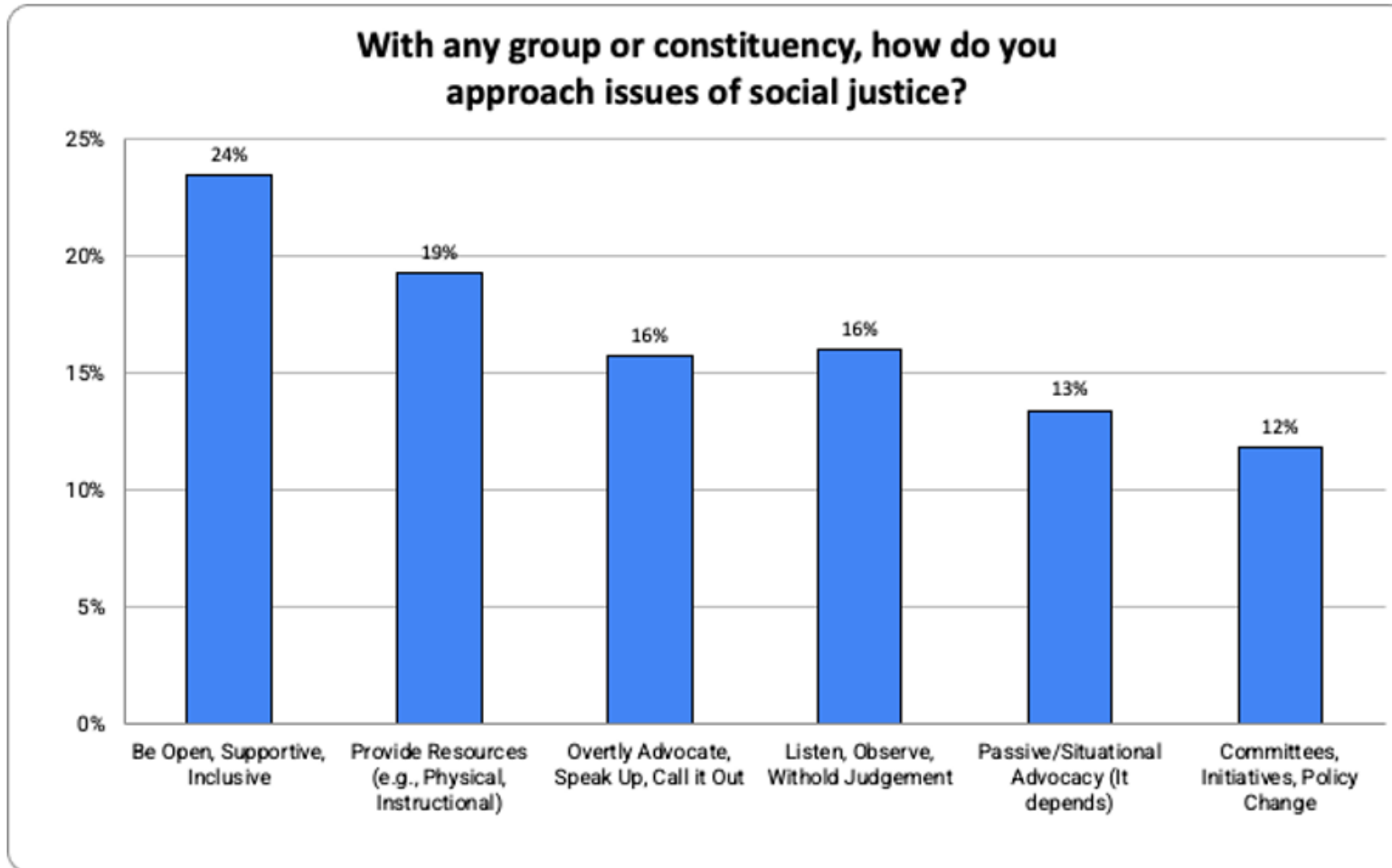Take Ownership | Make an Ongoing... | Be Historically... | Seek Educational... | Find Like Minded Allies | Be Aware of Risks &...

Open-ended Question (OeQ) Results: Question 1

With any group or constituency, how do you approach issues of social justice?

Category	Subcategories
Be Open, Supportive, Inclusive	Support constituent needs, Empathy, Respect identities, Be an ally w/out dominating, Ask questions
Provide Resources (e.g., Physical, Instructional)	Inclusive teaching, Critical thinking practices, Books/diverse collections, Displays, EDI materials, Events
Overtly Advocate, Speak Up, Call it Out	Name the issues, Be specific, Acknowledge privilege, Action/intention oriented
Listen, Observe, Withhold Judgement	Create a safe space, Be well informed, Center the voices, Be honest, Open discussions
Passive/Situational Advocacy (It depends)	Tread lightly, Avoid conflict, Find common ground, Fear of retribution, Only as it comes up
Committees, Outreach, Initiatives, Policy Change	Communities of Practice, Inclusive Policies, IDEA, DEI, Sustainability Committees/Initiatives, PD, Volunteering

OeQ Results: Question 2

What do you feel some of the benefits are in discussing matters of inequity within academic libraries?
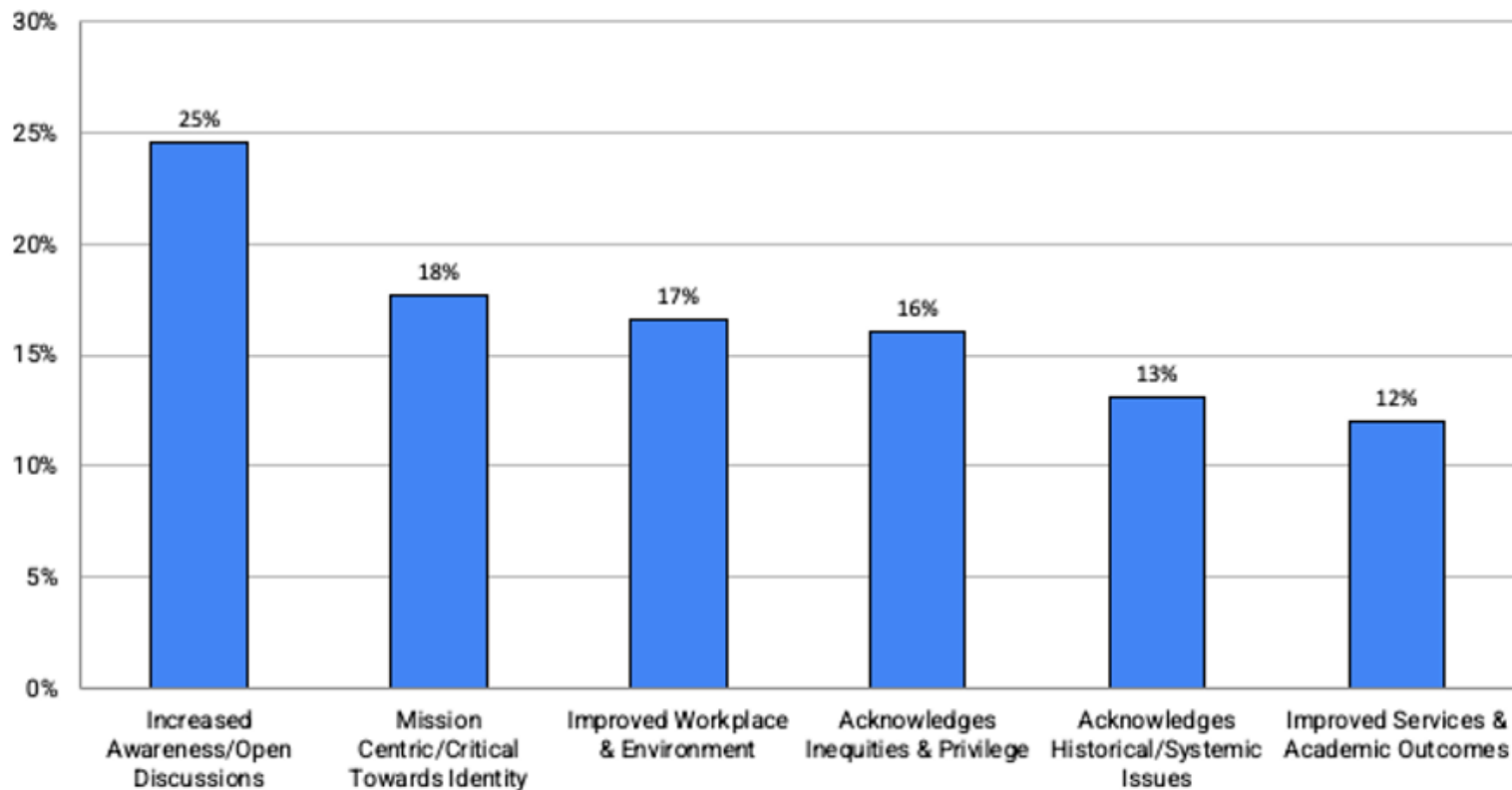
Category	Subcategories
Increased Awareness/Open Discussions	Examine biases, Engage students, peers, faculty, Critical thinking
Mission Centric/Critical Towards Identity	Library Identity, Hub of the campus & community, Shared space
Improved Workplace & Environment	Better climate for students and faculty of color, Welcoming atmosphere, Creating a safe space, Recruitment, Retention
Acknowledges Inequities & Privilege	Power structures, Dismantle barriers
Acknowledges Historical / Systemic Issues	Address the problems from within, Racial demographic disparities
Improved Services, Academic Outcomes	Access, Diverse collections, Address economic disadvantages

Chart values:
- Increased Awareness/Open Discussions: 25%
- Mission Centric/Critical Towards Identity: 18%
- Improved Workplace & Environment: 17%
- Acknowledges Inequities & Privilege: 16%
- Acknowledges Historical/Systemic Issues: 13%
- Improved Services & Academic Outcomes: 12%

OeQ Results: Question 3

What, if any, are some of the barriers you've encountered in advocating for social justice within academic libraries?

Bar chart values:
- Lack of Support: 24%
- Resistance to Change: 18%
- Cultural/Societal Barriers: 17%
- Underlying System Issues: 16%
- Performative Superficial Response: 14%
- Fear, Power Restrictions, Burnout: 12%
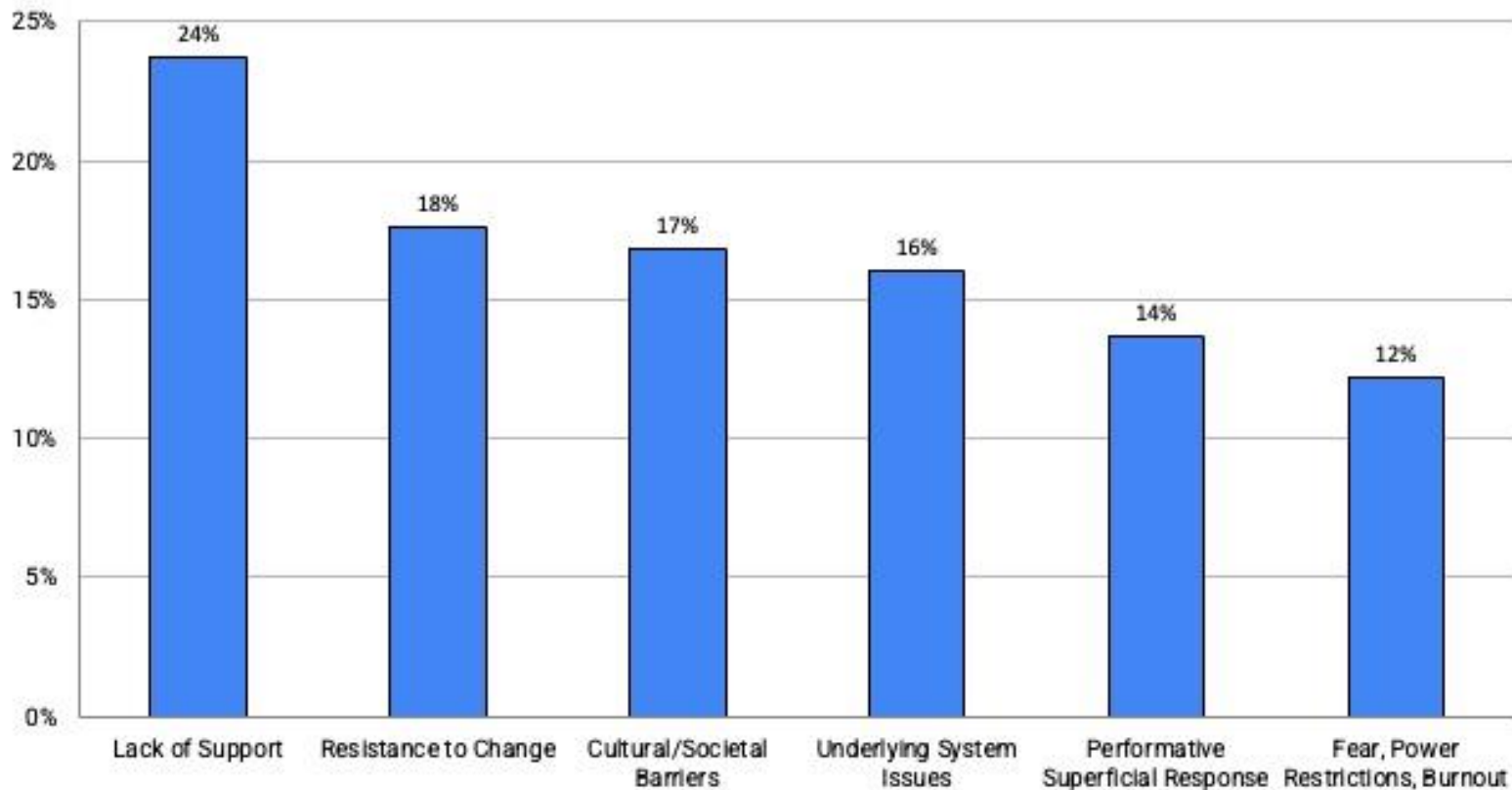
Category	Subcategories
Lack of Support	Institutional/Library leadership, Geographic, Budget/Funding restrictions, SJ work not incentivized/recognized, Contradicts current laws or policies
Resistance to Change	Maintain status quo, No problem/someone else's problem, Apathy, Disinterest
Cultural/Societal Barriers	White power, White fragility, Political/Conservative climate, Makes others uncomfortable
Fear, Power Restrictions, Burnout	Perceived as troublemaker, Ostracized, Non-tenured, Lacks experience/confidence, Faculty conflicts, Emotional exhaustion
Performative or Superficial Response	All talk/no action, Quick fixes, Unrealistic expectations, Tone deaf, Lack of commitment, Misunderstanding of social justice
Underlying Systemic Issues	Ignores historical role, Content/Subject neutrality, Classist environment, Undiversified resources, Inequitable compensation, Lack of PD

OeQ Results: Question 4

What advice might you offer to one of your peers who expressed interest in incorporating social justice into their professional practices?

Bar chart:
- Take Ownership: 24%
- Make an Ongoing Commitment: 21%
- Be Historically Informed/Culturally Competent: 17%
- Seek Educational Opportinities: 16%
- Find Like Minded Allies: 12%
- Be Aware of Risks & Consequences: 10%
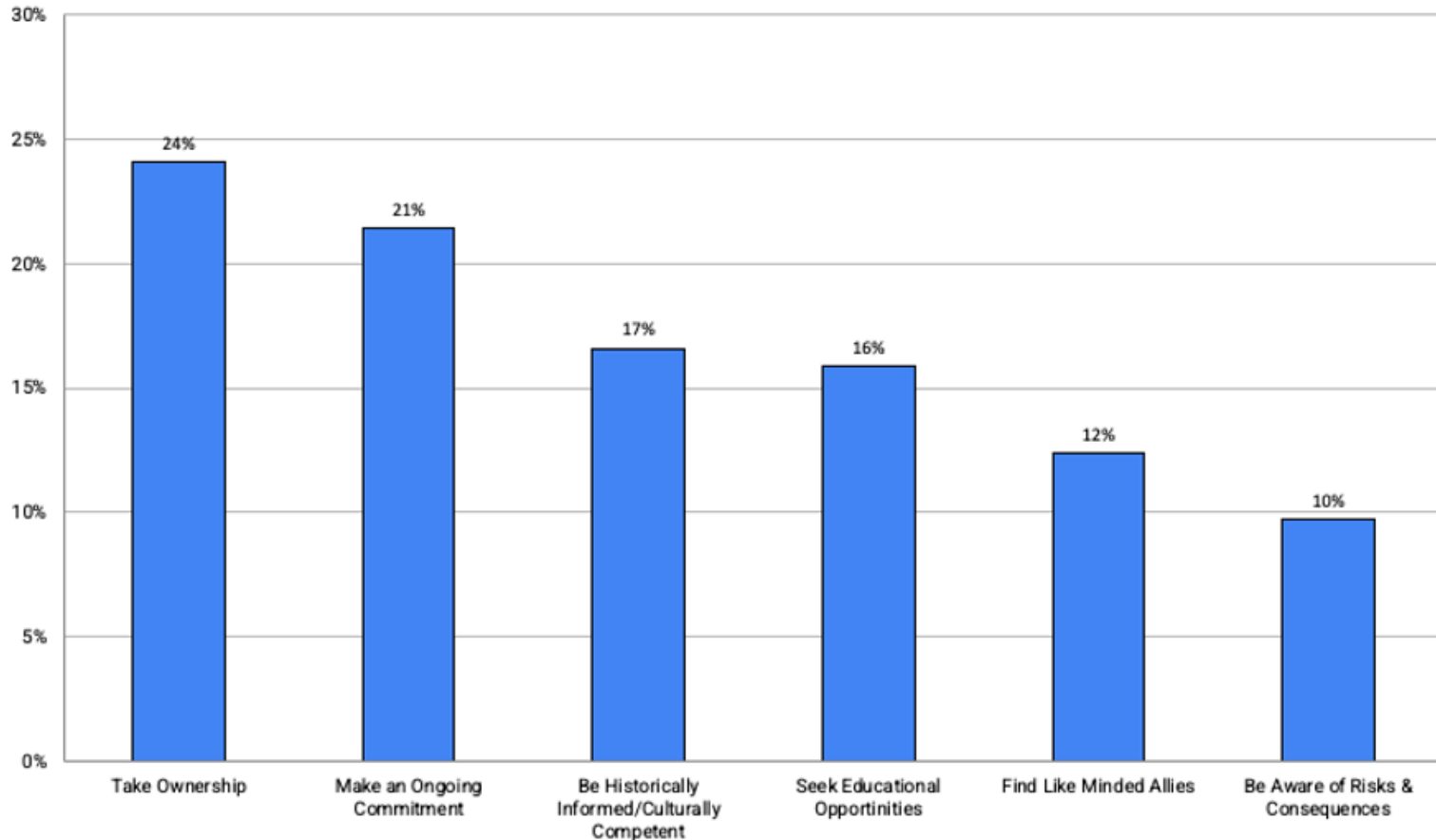
Category	Subcategories
Take Ownership	Be Persistent, Resilient, Humble, Patient & Persuasive, Interrogate biases, Build relationships, Leverage your privilege
Make an Ongoing Commitment	Start now/Start small, Be intentional, Do it for others and because it's right, Take action, Look for low-hanging fruit, Don't give up, Apply multiple approaches
Be Historically Informed/Culturally Competent	Avoid the soapbox, White Savior complex, Assuaging guilt, Be specific, Avoid jargon, Listen,
Seek Educational Opportunities	PD, SJ specific training, Committees, Campus/community events, Volunteer work
Find Like-Minded Allies	Mentors, Leaders and influencers, Support networks, Safety in numbers
Be Aware of the Risks & Consequences	Make Time for Self-Care, Reserve Energy, Professional consequences, Disagreement, Discomfort, Isolation, Time consuming

Qualitative Results: Six SJA Narratives

Alisha, a faculty librarian at a community college who serves as part of her library's leadership. First encounter: Ableism. Focus: ADA accessibility; equitable student support services.

Tracy, an associate librarian who is part of her library's administration at a small college. First encounter: Classism. Focus: Library specific diversity audit; incorporating DEI into her strategic initiatives.

Shay, who serves at a small university and has only one year in the profession. First encounter: Heterosexism. Focus: Professional development of library personnel in DEI; applying CRT within library pedagogy.

Jennifer, who hails from a mid-sized university and has a combined thirty-five years in library and leadership experience. First encounter: Sexism. Focus: Equitable pay; increasing staff compensation and benefits.

Michael, another seasoned librarian who is part blood American Indian serving at a large institution on a border state. First encounter: Ableism and bullying. Focus: Mentoring disadvantaged groups; National advocacy.

Sydney, a mid-career professional who leverages her position as a instruction librarian to further social justice reform. First encounter: Religious intolerance. Focus: Feminism and gender equality; library outreach.

SJA Demographics:
Personal : 5 females, 1 male, 26-64 years old, 5 White, 1 American Indian

Professional : 1-45 years of experience, all but one provided instruction; half were part of their library's administration

Institutional : Geographically dispersed; 3 universities, 2 colleges, 1 community college; 2 with < 20k students, 1 < 10k, and 3 < 5k

Qualitative SJA Results

RQ3: What particular lived experiences led academic librarians who are actively involved in social reform to become SJAs?

Environmental
- Held significant privilege / Middle-to-upper-middle class households
- Strong support systems within family and community

Development of Cultural Competency
- Awareness developed during college years
- Continuous learning / Professional development
- Organizational or National Participation / Committee Work

Qualitative SJA Results

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Educational Development of Cultural Competency
- Awareness developed during college years
- Continuous learning / Professional development
- Organizational or National Participation / Committee Work

Experience as an Outsider
- Half of the SJAs identified LGBTQIA+ orientation as a source of isolation
- Witnessed or were victims of numerous other 'isms'
- Increased sense of empathy

Qualitative SJA Results

RQ4: What strategies do SJAs describe as having the most impact upon challenging the sociopolitical status quo within their library, institution, and beyond?

Direct Engagement with Underrepresented Groups

- Efforts to increase both student and staff engagement
- Infusing DEI into instructional pedagogies

Create External Pathways for Students and Staff

- Partnering with already established groups
- Mentorship
- Internal initiatives that lead to advancement

Qualitative SJA Results

RQ4: What strategies do SJAs describe as having the most impact upon challenging the sociopolitical status quo within their library, institution, and beyond?

Direct Engagement with Underrepresented Groups

- Efforts to increase both student and staff engagement
- Infusing DEI into instructional pedagogies

Create External Pathways for Students and Staff

- Partnering with already established groups
- Mentorship
- Internal initiatives that lead to advancement

Form Alliances with Like-Minded Allies

- Increases success of any potential social justice initiative
- Seek out influential allies that hold higher levels of authority
- Safety in numbers; avoids isolation and burnout

Integrative (Mixed) Results

RQ5: What personal attributes do advocates describe as necessary for enabling librarians to take on a greater social justice advocacy role?

Take Responsibility for Actions and Behavior

- Own your privilege
- Interrogate your biases
- Impact of your privileges over others

Develop the Art of Respectful Listening

- Open discussions ensuring all voices are heard
- Withhold judgment
- Respectful dialog

Integrative (Mixed) Results

RQ5: What personal attributes do advocates describe as necessary for enabling librarians to take on a greater social justice advocacy role?

Take Responsibility for Actions and Behavior

- Own your privilege
- Interrogate your biases

Develop the Art of Respectful Listening

- Open discussions ensuring all voices are heard
- Respectful dialog
- Withhold judgment

Be Open, Supportive, and Inclusive

- Understand perspectives of those less privileged
- Be a respectful ally and observe boundaries
- Create a safer, more welcoming atmosphere

Integrative (Mixed) Results:

RQ6: What individual, institutional, or societal barriers or challenges do advocates describe as impeding their efforts towards achieving social justice reform?

Performative/Superficial Response
- Low hanging fruit, box-checking, all talk no action
- Being uninformed or unaware on multiple fronts
- Half-hearted DEI initiatives

Integrative (Mixed) Results:

RQ6: What individual, institutional, or societal barriers or challenges do advocates describe as impeding their efforts towards achieving social justice reform?

Performative/Superficial Response
- Low hanging fruit, box-checking, all talk no action
- Being uninformed or unaware on multiple fronts
- Half-hearted DEI initiatives

Lack of Support
- Budget restrictions / Lack of funding
- Social justice work neither acknowledged nor incentivized

Underlying Systemic Issues
- Historical role of libraries and academia
- Lack of diversity in staff, faculty, and librarians vs. student population
- Inconsistent with HSI status and DEI initiatives

Implications for Practice

Implications for Practice: Support Issues

Academic librarians have a vested interest in social justice work and need support

We need people doing lots of different things. We need grunt work. We need Board members. We need bullhorns. We need bots. We need books. No one person should feel they need to do it all, but every single person has a role to play and can do something. Advocating for social justice is one thing. Being about it is another. Either is fine. Both is better. (Librarian Advocate)

I am so dedicated and stubborn in this regard I cannot retire until I get some staff upgraded! (Jennifer)

Many librarians, including whites, apply their own experiences of being marginalized

For my fellow BIPOC peers I would encourage them to not devote all of their energy to it, because it can be very exhausting to work to change the system while being actively oppressed by the system, and they don't owe any system that energy. (Librarian Advocate)

Knowing this is the environment and knowing this [region] and how I grew up here, I have my pride slides in my window, I openly talk about race. I say race. I say Black and White and Latinx. I say things instead of just diversity, and I have had students, mostly students of color really open up to me. (Shay)

Implications for Practice: Support Issues

There is an overwhelming need for institutional support as opposed to performative activism

When advocating for social justice, people (mostly higher-up faculty and administration) want to settle for safe DEI initiatives that provide a performative display of support. This is hurtful because the positive optics pivot away from real conversations that need to be had to improve inclusion and real social justice initiatives (pay equity, equitable professional development, funding, etc.).

(Librarian Advocate)

Implications for Practice: Systemic Issues

Resistance to change within a culture of silence

A barrier that I see is a surface-level interest and discussion around DEI that is not matched by an equivalent amount of action. What work that is done tends to be around individual events and initiatives, rather than on a systemic policy level. Many of our colleagues believe in diversity as long as it doesn't disrupt their way of doing things, and as long as they themselves don't have to change how they think. (Librarian Advocate)

I honestly believe to my core that representation matters. Students need to see, hear up the wazoo, that there are faculty and staff on campus who have similar lived experiences to them. Because if we don't make that known to students, they're just going to feel Other. And those of us on the faculty who are Other, need to know that there are people like us, who are by virtue of our lived experiences, wedded to creating societal change. (Tracy)

Implications for Practice: Systemic Issues

Recruitment, hiring, and retention practices for inservice and preservice librarians

It's not that we don't try to hire more Hispanics and or other people of color. It's that they're not there. Because taking on a bunch of debt for a job that you start at $42,000 a year, that's really hard to do. You're coming from privilege if you're able to do that. I'm 60 years old, I've been a librarian for over 30 years, and I am still living paycheck to paycheck. If I had kids, I don't know what I'd do...If we really want to work on our diversity, inclusion and equity, we have to work on the status of librarians, and get our pay up far enough that [persons of color] won't look at it and say, it's just not worth it. (Michael)

Literature regarding LIS curriculum and preservice outcomes

Alabi, J. (2018). From hostile to inclusive: Strategies for improving the racial climate of academic libraries. *Library Trends*, *67*(1), 131–146. https://doi.org/10.1353/lib.2018.0029

Jaeger, P. T., Cooke, N. A., Feltis, C., & Hamiel, M. (2015). The virtuous circle revisited: Injecting diversity, inclusion, rights, justice, and equity into LIS from education to advocacy. *The Library Quarterly*, *85*(2), 150–171. https://doi.org/10.1086/680154

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Implications for Practice: Lack of Diversity

The need to serve an increasingly diverse student population

Many students come into the library spaces or receive a service from the library, so how we interact with them can greatly impact them on their academic journey, either directly or indirectly. Through an academic library's social justice efforts, students' sense of belonging, academic success, and world knowledge can be increased. Additionally, the faculty and staff that work in the library can have a more healthy work environment, one that fosters care and community and purpose. (Librarian Advocate)

Every time they bring that up, everyone in the library is like, 'Well, they should answer the phone then.' ...if you're worried about retention, literally if you just answer the phone, miracles happen. (Alisha)

Implications for Practice: Lack of Diversity

Confront the problem of neutrality (aka: colorblindness)

If we don't talk about it, we won't really grapple with the fact that libraries are not really neutral spaces, as we like to think, and that our services aren't equitable - and if we don't grapple with that, we can't change it. (Librarian Advocate)

My stance on neutrality would be that any presumed neutrality is not actually neutral because it's probably silencing someone, and that it's okay to make arguments, but it's also necessary to listen respectfully and not shut down disagreement. But then, the problem is there are some disagreements that you should shut down because they are really harming someone. That's where the line is, I think. (Sydney)

I do not believe in library neutrality. I believe by their very existence libraries are not neutral. And librarians who try to hide between content neutrality are hiding behind a wall of straw because neutrality is not possible for multiple reasons. (Michael)

Implications for Practice: Lack of Research

Not Enough Data on Privileged Groups or Allies

Frameworks that seek to simplify and make accessible complicated dynamics never capture the full complexity of the situation or issue. (p. 7)*

Not Enough Data on Sexual Orientation in Libraries

My biggest frustrations are two attitudes. First, we don't need this anymore and second, social justice only includes issues surrounding ethnicity but does not include issues surrounding sex/gender/societal roles and expectations. (Librarian Advocate)

*Goodman, D. J. (2011). *Promoting diversity and social justice: Educating people from privileged groups*, (2nd ed.). Routledge Ltd.

Tips on Expanding Your Reach

- Present results to your peers and colleagues at a national conference
- Affords networking opportunities for future research
- People in academic libraries are interested in social justice outcomes
- Research on gender identity is largely patron based
- Emphasis on public libraries or collections, e.g., book bans, diversity audits
- Little to no exploration on sexual orientation in any sector

Thank you!

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Appendix includes data and links for ALA and Ithaka Surveys
Link to full dissertation: https://digitalcommons.molloy.edu/etd/133

Appendix

Excerpts from an ELUNA learns 2021 Presentation: *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusiveness in Search Advisory Group Update.* On-demand Streaming available via: https://el-una.org/meetings/eluna-events-on-demand-playback/eluna-learns-2021/eluna-learns-dei-diversity-equity-and-inclusion/
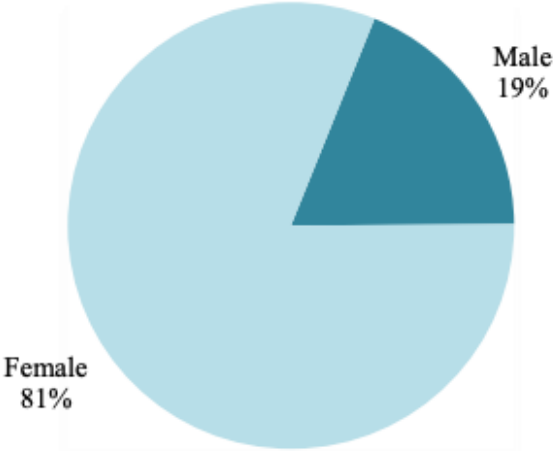
Whiteness within the Overall Library Profession

ALA Members by Race or Family Origin
% of members self-identifying

	2014	2017
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1.1	1.2
Asian	3.5	3.6
Black or African American	4.3	4.4
Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.3	0.2
White	87.1	86.7
Other	3.7	4.0

When asked **"How do you describe your ethnicity?"** in 2014, *3.9%* responded "Hispanic or Latino." In 2017, *4.7%* responded "Hispanic or Latino."

Gender & Age within the Overall Library Profession
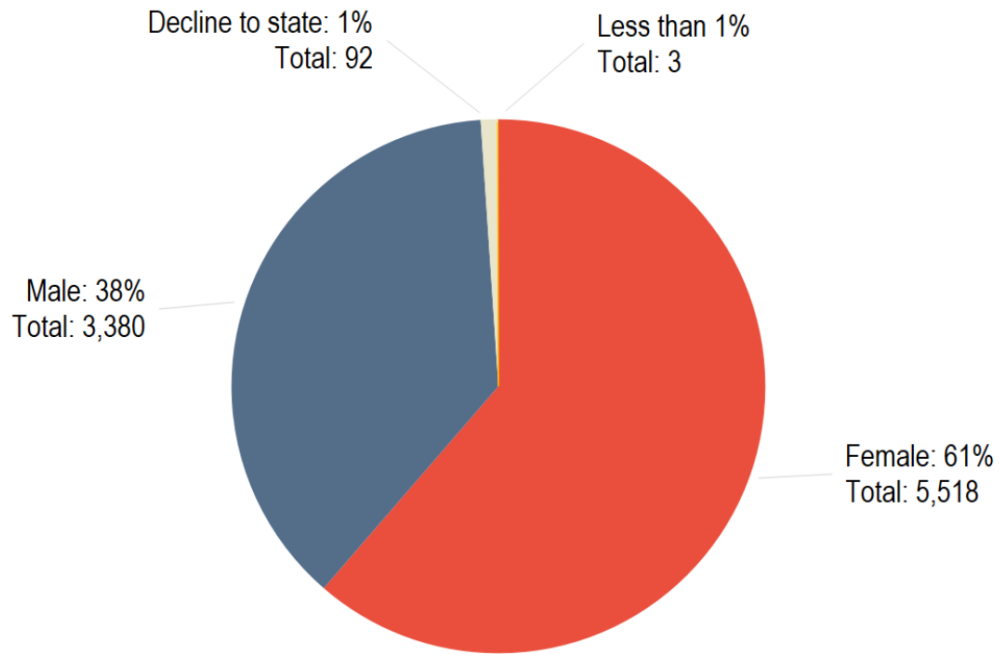
ALA Members by Gender
(2014 & 2017)

Male
19%

Female
81%

ALA Members by Age

■ 2017 ■ 2014

Age	2017	2014
75+	2.3%	1.1%
65-74	13.5%	8.4%
55-64	21.5%	24.3%
45-54	21.7%	20.7%
35-44	22.8%	21.8%
25-34	17.1%	20.9%
Under 25	1.1%	2.7%
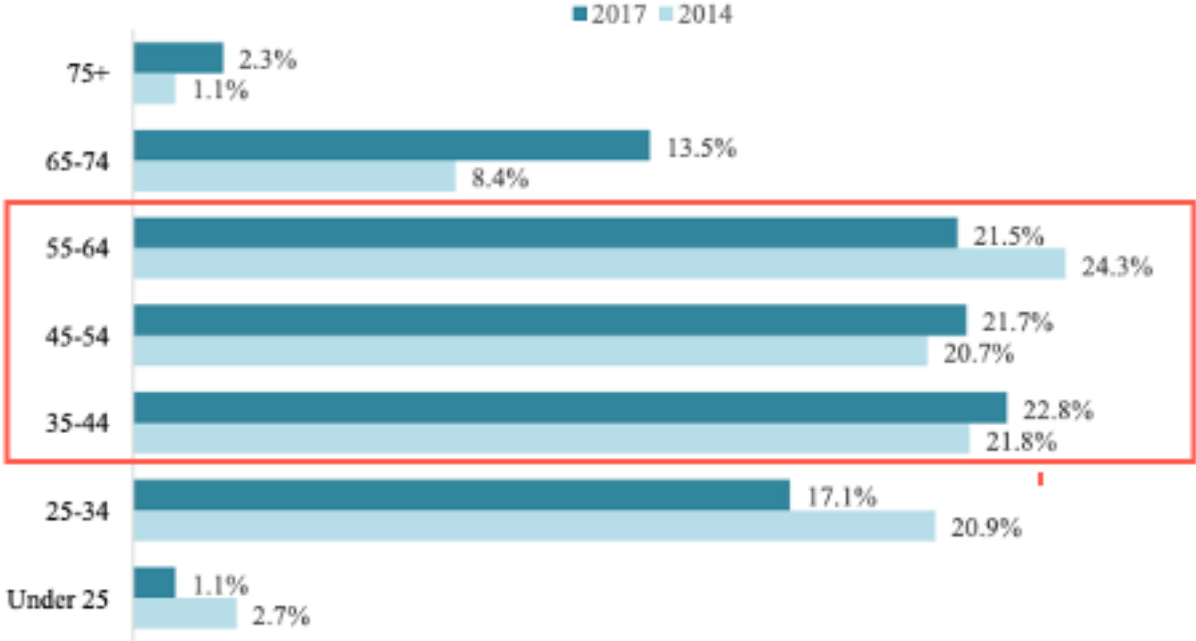
"As of January 9, 2017, 37,666 current members have participated in this voluntary, self-selected survey. 74% of current members have participated in the survey."
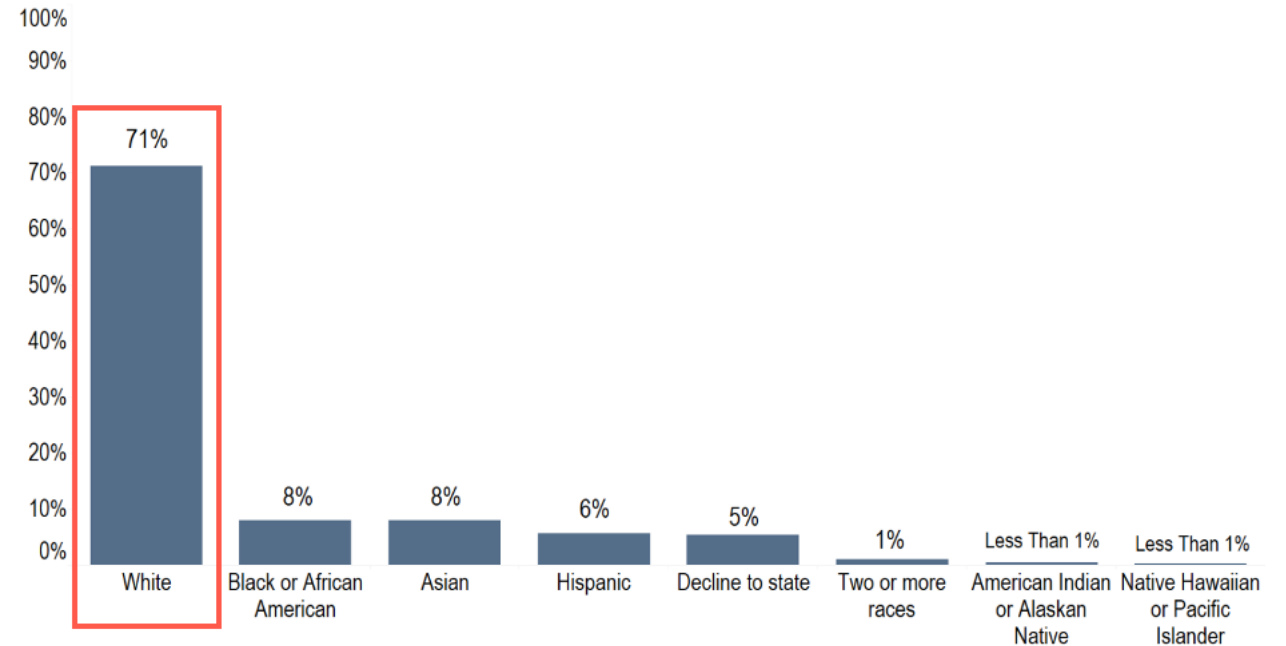
Ithaca S&R 2017 Report on Academic Libraries
Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity: ARL Demographics

Gender in the ARL

Decline to state: 1%
Total: 92

Less than 1%
Total: 3

Male: 38%
Total: 3,380

Female: 61%
Total: 5,518

Race/Ethnicity

- White: 71%
- Black or African American: 8%
- Asian: 8%
- Hispanic: 6%
- Decline to state: 5%
- Two or more races: 1%
- American Indian or Alaskan Native: Less Than 1%
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander: Less Than 1%

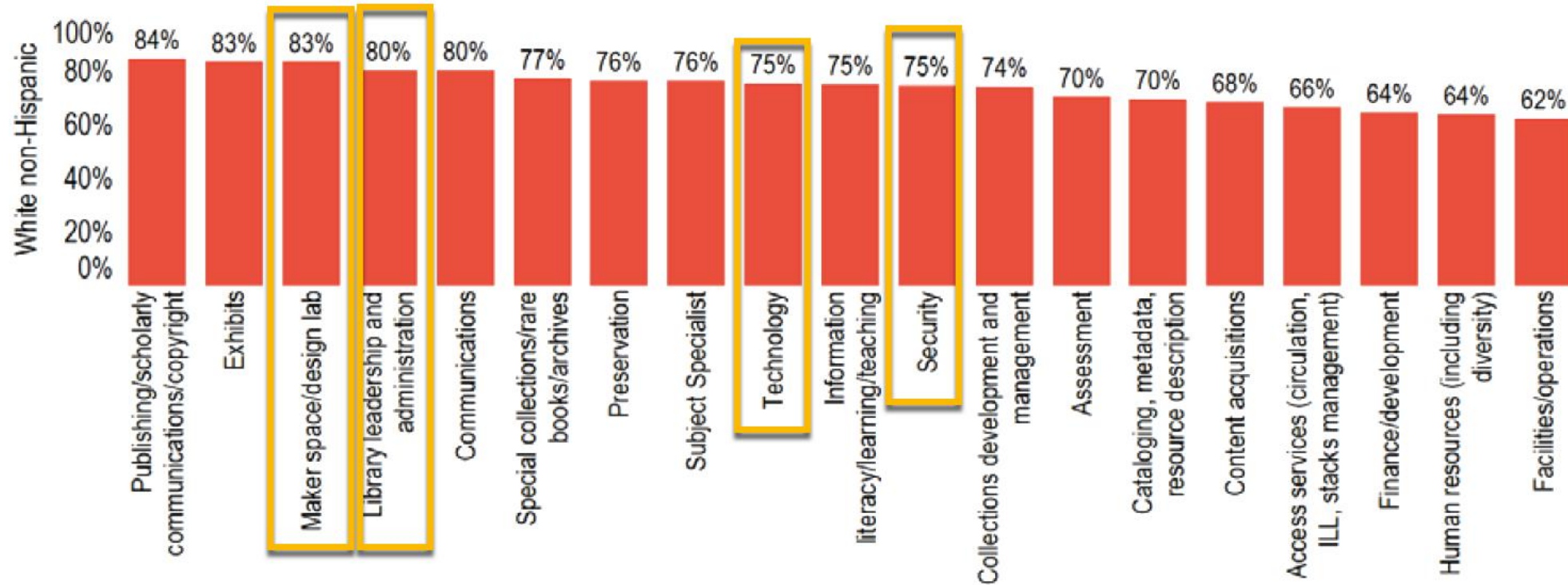*Source: https://sr.ithaka.org/publications/inclusion-diversity-and-equity-arl/*

Ithaca S&R 2017 Report
Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity: ARL Demographics

Race & Ethnicity by Job Type